

wherein the first and second drive branching links respectively converts the linearly guided displacement motion to a toggling motion of the first and second toggle means, and the first and second toggle means transfer the toggling motion to a linear cyclic motion of the slide.

At least the above bolded features are not disclosed, taught, or suggested by the cited prior art, Thomas.

A) Thomas does not disclose, teach, or suggest “first and second drive branching links separately coupled to said guiding means; and first and second toggle means coupled respectively to the first and second drive branching links, and said first and second toggle means coupled separately to the slide.”

The first and second drive branching links branch off separately from the guiding means to work in tandem to toggle the first and second toggle means, respectively. No such structures are disclosed, taught or suggested by Thomas. Thomas discloses one intermediate lever 24 that is toggled by the connecting rod 22. At least for this reason, claim 1 and other claims with similar features are not anticipated by Thomas.

B) In the Office Action, Thomas’s drive mechanism 14, which contains the intermediate lever 24, the connecting rod 22, the joint rod 30 and so forth, is equated to an adjusting means of claim 1. However, the adjusting means of claim 1 is just one component of the slide drive device and is separate from, for example, the toggle means. This is made clear by the fact that the connecting link is coupled to the adjusting means in claim 1. The closest equivalent of the adjusting means in Thomas is Thomas’s intermediate lever 24, which has the connecting link 34 for making coupling adjustments. However, it is also this same intermediate lever 24 that toggles based on the movement of the connecting rod.

In contrast, as claimed, the toggle means, which are toggled by the drive branching links, and the adjusting means, which adjust the linear motion of the guiding means, are two separate elements connected by the drive branching link. Having the adjustment means and the toggling means separated allows for the adjustment of linear motion. That is, the claimed invention was

designed specifically to separate the adjusting means the toggle means. At least for this reason, claim 1 and other similar claims with similar features are not anticipated by Thomas.

C) The present invention as set forth in claim 1 is directed to “a slide drive device for a press machine having a slide.” On the other hand, Thomas describes a stroke adjustment device for pickling machines. Thomas states in column 1, lines 9 to 31:

A pickling machine is described in DE 3,716,802, which serves for injecting pickling brine into the goods to be pickled by means of a number of needles. The needles are arranged on a needle carrier, which is arranged so that it moves vertically over a conveyor for the pickling goods. After the pickling goods have been introduced onto the conveyor, the needle carrier is lowered so that the needles can penetrate into the pickling goods. A lower holder that can be moved relative to the needle carrier is first lowered together with the needle carrier and then arrives in position on the upper side of the pickling goods, so that it falls short relative to the needle carrier. The relative motion between lower holder and needle carrier serves for controlling valves for the input of brine, so that the brine is released from the needles only if they have penetrated into the meat. In the subsequent upward motion of the needle carrier, the lower holder serves for the purpose of removing the pickling goods from the needles. If the needles are retracted from the pickling goods, and the lower holder has been lifted off again from the pickling goods, the conveyor is placed in operation for a brief time, so that the now pickled goods can be transported off and new pickling goods are introduced. In this way, a new pickling cycle can begin.

Thomas' invention has a mechanically driven needle carrier 12 (allegedly equivalent to a slide of claim 1) containing needles for driving needles into pickling goods to release brines into the goods. The slide for a press machine clearly is not a needle carrier for carrying needles and would be rendered inoperable if a needle is used. Stated in another way, a stroke adjusting device for pickling machines, which is designed to thrust needles into food articles, would be structurally inoperable in a press machine. A person of ordinary skill in the art would not have found Thomas's

structure to be equivalent to the slide for a press machine. At least for this reason, claim 1 and other claims with similar features are not anticipated by Thomas.

For the foregoing reasons, claims 1-3 are not anticipated by Thomas.

Claim 17 would not be anticipated for at least reason C). Claims 18-22 would not be anticipated for at least reasons A) to C). Claim 33 would not be anticipated at least for reason C). Claim 34 would not be anticipated for at least reasons A) to C).

Claim Rejection – 35 USC §103(a)

Claims 35 and 36 have been rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Thomas. Claim 35, which depend from claim 1, is not disclosed, taught, or suggested at least for the same reasons as claim 1. Claim 36, which depend from claim 17, is not disclosed, taught, or suggested at least for the same reasons as claim 17.

New Claims

New claims 37 and 38, having similar features as claim 1, are not anticipated by or obvious from the cited prior art at least for the same reasons as claim 1.

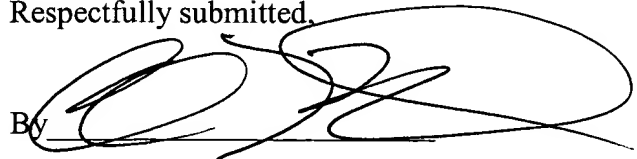
For the foregoing reasons, all pending claims are believed to be allowable over the cited prior art.

In view of the above amendment, applicant believes the pending application is in condition for allowance.

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Respectfully submitted,

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